

Learning in EYFS: What Reading looks like in Early Years

The EYFS framework is structured very differently to the national curriculum as it is organised across seven areas of learning rather than subject areas. The aim of this document is to help subject leaders to understand how the skills taught across EYFS feed into national curriculum subjects.

This document demonstrates which statements from the 2020 Development Matters are prerequisite skills for reading within the national curriculum. The table below outlines the most relevant statements taken from the Early Learning Goals in the EYFS statutory framework and the Development Matters age ranges for Three and Four-Year-Olds and Reception to match the programme of study for reading.

The most relevant statements for reading are taken from the following areas of learning:

- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Understanding the World

Reading: Word Reading			
Phonics and Decoding			
Three and Four-Year-Olds	Literacy		• Develop their phonological awareness, so that they can: • spot and suggest rhymes • count or clap syllables in words • recognise words with the same initial sound, such as money and mother
Reception	Literacy		• Read individual letters by saying the sounds for them • Blend sounds into words, so that they can read short words made up of letter-sound correspondences • Read some letter groups that each represent one sound and say sounds for them • Read simple phrases and sentences made up of words with known letter-sound correspondences and, where necessary, a few exception words
ELG	Literacy	Word Reading	• Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs • Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending • Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words
Common Exception Words			
Reception	Literacy		• Read a few common exception words matched to the school's phonic programme
Fluency			
Three and Four-Year-Olds	Literacy		• Understand the five key concepts about print: • print has meaning • print can have different purposes • we can read English text from left to right and from top to bottom • the names of different parts of a book • page sequencing • Develop their phonological awareness, so that they can: • spot and suggest rhymes • count or clap syllables in words • recognise words with the same initial sound, such as money and mother
Reception	Literacy		• Blend sounds into words, so that they can read short words made up of letter-sound correspondences • Read simple phrases and sentences made up of words with known letter-sound correspondences and, where necessary, a few exception words • Re-read books to build up their confidence in word reading, their fluency and their understanding and enjoyment
ELG	Literacy	Reading	• Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words •

Reading: Comprehension				
Understanding and Correcting Inaccuracies				
Three and Four-Year-Olds	Communication and Language		- Enjoy listening to longer stories and can remember much of what happens. - Understand 'why' questions, like: "Why do you think the caterpillar got so fat?" - Be able to express a point of view and debate when they disagree with an adult or a friend, using words as well as actions.	
	Literacy		Engage in extended conversations about stories, learning new vocabulary.	
Reception	Communication and Language		- Listen to and talk about stories to build familiarity and understanding. - Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text, some as exact repetition and some in their own words. - Listen carefully to rhymes and songs, paying attention to how they sound. - Listen to and talk about selected non-fiction to develop a deep familiarity with new knowledge and vocabulary.	
ELG	Literacy	Comprehension	- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary. - Anticipate (where appropriate) key events in stories. - Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role play.	
Comparing, Contrasting and Commenting				
Three and Four-Year-Olds	Communication and Language		Be able to express a point of view and debate when they disagree with an adult or a friend, using words as well as actions.	
Reception	Understanding the World		Compare and contrast characters from stories, including figures from the past.	
ELG	Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding	Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.	
		Speaking	Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.	
Words in Context and Authorial Choice				
Three and Four-Year-Olds	Communication and Language		Use a wider range of vocabulary.	
	Literacy		Engage in extended conversations about stories, learning new vocabulary.	
Reception	Communication and Language		- Learn new vocabulary. - Use new vocabulary throughout the day. - Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text, some as exact repetition and some in their own words. - Use new vocabulary in different contexts. - Listen to and talk about selected non-fiction to develop a deep familiarity with new knowledge and vocabulary.	
ELG	Communication and Language	Speaking	Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.	
	Literacy	Comprehension	- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary. - Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role play.	
Inference and Prediction				
Three and Four-Year-Olds	Communication and Language		Understand 'why' questions, like: "Why do you think the caterpillar got so fat?"	
ELG	Communication and Language	Speaking	Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.	
	Literacy	Comprehension	Anticipate (where appropriate) key events in stories.	

Poetry and Performance			
Three and Four-Year-Olds	Communication and Language		• Sing a large repertoire of songs. • Know many rhymes, be able to talk about familiar books, and be able to tell a long story.
	Expressive Arts and Design		• Take part in simple pretend play, using an object to represent something else even though they are not similar. • Begin to develop complex stories using small world equipment like animal sets, dolls and dolls houses, etc. • Remember and sing entire songs. • Sing the pitch of a tone sung by another person ('pitch match'). • Sing the melodic shape (moving melody, such as up and down, and down and up) of familiar songs. • Create their own songs, or improvise a song around one they know.
Reception	Communication and Language		• Engage in storytimes. • Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text, some as exact repetition and some in their own words. • Learn rhymes, poems and songs.
	Expressive Arts and Design		• Sing in a group or on their own, increasingly matching the pitch and following the melody. • Develop storylines in their pretend play.
ELG	Literacy	Comprehension	• Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
	Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials	• Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.
		Being Imaginative and Expressive	• Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with their peers and their teacher. • Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and (when appropriate) try to move in time to music.
Non-Fiction			
Reception	Communication and Language		• Engage in non-fiction books. • Listen to and talk about selected non-fiction to develop a deep familiarity with new knowledge and vocabulary.
ELG	Communication and Language	Speaking	• Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.
	Literacy	Comprehension	• Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role play.

